Experiencing DU

We, OLLI at DU, are aligned with a world-class institution, the University of Denver. Learning more about this great institution brings us - as an organization and potentially each of us personally - new insights and opportunities. In an effort to better acquaint us all with DU I have launched this new segment of the OLLI newsletter. In this opening segment, I would like to share my experiences with The Lamont School of Music and the Knoebel Institute for Positive Aging.

Last summer I had the chance to spend some time with Chris Wiger, the Director of Public Relations at Lamont. I learned that the Lamont School of Music is widely recognized as a premier university music school with a long-standing tradition of excellence. A performance-focused school, it is housed in the renowned Newman Center for the Performing Arts. Students at Lamont learn the value of performing on various stages while in school and are prepared to launch their careers once they have completed their education at Lamont.

I further learned that The Lamont Society, an organization of individuals that support the school, have access to Lamont one day a year to learn about and experience the school. For a mere $120 per year, one can become a member of the Lamont Society and enjoy a full day at Lamont. I decided to give this a try.

The day began with a continental breakfast where I had a chance to meet other members of the Society. I felt right at home as the vast majority of attendees were OLLI type folks. Having chosen my preference for each hour ‘experience’ from a list of five options, I received my personalized agenda for the day and off I went, to enjoy, to learn, and to interact with students, faculty and fellow Society members. What an experience and what an amazing place! Did you know that the Newman center is actually a series of five buildings, each with their own foundation and separation between the walls? I learned this during my tour of Lamont (one of the offerings). You will have to become a member to learn more about the benefits this structure brings to the students and event attendees.

— Barbe Ratcliffe

Being a Better Facilitator

On a cold and snowy day in December, fifty-eight OLLI facilitators braved the elements and attend an OLLI presentation by Dr. Allison Friederichs. Dr. Friederichs serves as the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and an assistant teaching professor at the University of Denver’s college of professional and continuing studies: University College. Dr. Friederichs engages in research and public speaking in the area of how the adult brain learns, and the implications of that knowledge on teaching and course development.

This facilitator-only event focused on how to capitalize on how adults learn to maximize the effectiveness of each facilitator’s style, aiming to provide our members with amazing courses and presentations. Dr. Friederichs’ talk spanned both the theoretical underpinnings and practical tips for mature brain-based teaching.

At the close of the presentation, Allison asked attendees to capture their insights and how they might use this new knowledge...a tactic that assists the adult brain in capturing and using knowledge.

— Barbe Ratcliffe

DU’s audio/video department agreed to tape Allison’s presentation so it is viewable by those facilitators who were unable to attend, and facilitators of the future
Manager’s Message

As OLLI at DU grows, it’s clear there would be no OLLI without our volunteers. An organization of this size (about 1,000 members are taking classes at OLLI Central in the Winter Term) depends upon the goodwill of volunteers to keep the wheels turning.

So when I was handed the responsibility for finding and assigning greeters to welcome our members back for Winter Term, I was delighted at the response and willingness to serve. These are the ladies and gentlemen at the front tables at each of our sites who help you find your classes, hand goodie bags to new members and generally help you feel right at home. They really step up to the plate.

Some of our greeters are among the most knowledgeable of OLLI members, familiar with the drill and how to address any little pesky issue that may arise, drawing on previous volunteer commitments. What they do is invaluable.

Similarly, class assistants are essential pieces of the OLLI puzzle. Their support of the facilitators in each classroom makes the classroom process more efficient and the learning experience more rewarding for members.

And of course, the facilitators themselves are volunteers. Whether they are leading classes in their respective fields of expertise or venturing into new topics of personal interest, the time and effort they donate on behalf of OLLI is impressive – and very much appreciated.

People like to be asked. As we continue to grow, we will continue to do just that, so don't be surprised if Operations Manager Darcey VanWagner, me, or members of the Curriculum Committee (also volunteers) come calling.

To that end, we are planning a Volunteer Fair during Spring term. We’ll have tables set up at Central Christian Church and at Harvest Bible Chapel on separate days to share volunteer opportunities and for you to ask questions about their various roles. We hope you will visit these events and that you will find something that works for you. That would be a win-win!

– Paul Simon, OLLI Central Manager

The Roles & Responsibilities of Your OLLI Central Staff

It has come to my attention that many folks are unclear as to the primary roles and responsibilities of the staff at OLLI Central. To reduce the confusion and assist in better understanding who is the best person to ask about an issue or concern, I thought it valuable to share how we are organized.

First, let me begin by saying that we are all here to assist you. With that said, the primary roles are:

**Debbie Loftin** – The keeper of all things dealing with the office at 2211 S Josephine Street. In addition to this, Debbie keeps herself very busy developing the catalog from the course descriptions, answering questions, recording requests for the many events held at OLLI at DU, keeping all of the spreadsheets and monies properly in alignment and accounted for; and generally keeping us all sane and moving ahead.

**Paul Simon** – The Site Manager for OLLI Central. Paul is responsible for a great deal of the communication; for the financial management; for overall facilitator training and development; new member orientation and member greeters; the Interactive learning classes; works with the Advisory Council on setting the course for the Site and with the Curriculum Committee assisting in the manner deemed most useful. Paul is also very engaged in the early stages of the registration process (finalized by Debbie) and in special events.

**Darcey VanWagner** – The Facilities Manager for OLLI Central. If it deals with facilities, Darcey is the individual to go to. She coordinates all of the facilities from the point of contract to the determination of room assignments and of facilitator support/training as it deals with the organization of documents to the AV equipment in the room and the first weeks of class. Darcey also coordinates the communication thru the Class Assistants and ensures a smooth flow of information for all members.

**Barbe Ratcliffe** – The Executive Director of OLLI at DU. Barbe is responsible for all Sites (OLLI West, OLLI South, OLLI Central) and for the relationship with the University of Denver, the relationship with the Osher Foundation, and the forward focus of OLLI at DU. Barbe is also responsible for the International Symposium and the Summer Seminars.

– Barbe Ratcliffe

Past Advisory Council President Anita Leitner presents a bouquet of flowers to Marilyn Heller at Marilyn’s southeast Denver home. Marilyn recently retired as OLLI Central’s liaison with the Tattered Cover after serving in that role since the early days of VIVA!, OLLI at DU’s predecessor.
Hiking Group Celebrates Two Years Together

For two years the dedicated participants in Sheldon Fisher’s WELLaware hiking group have been traversing hill and dale every two weeks for their health and sense of accomplishment along with trail master Val Gheller. Do they bond? Here are two comments from regulars upon the group’s recent two-year anniversary celebration:

“Sheldon is my hero. He had a great idea, acted on it and generously made it possible for me (and many others) to enjoy hiking, which I feel is the purest of pleasures. He has offered us the beautiful Colorado outdoors with some of the nicest people I have had the good fortune to meet.

“Sheldon and Val have taken us to places all over the front range that vary in landscape; each location with unique qualities. I never considered hiking all year long, and found that each season is extraordinary. I love that Val also provides legend, geology and history about the places we hike.

“I’ve made wonderful friends and shared good conversation thanks to Sheldon and Val making connections possible on our hiking trips. Sheldon genuinely cares about the hiking group and goes above and beyond to make people feel welcome. He helps hikers find rides, drives hikers himself and makes sure every hiker is accounted for at the end of the day. He does this without expectation of thanks or the appreciation he deserves.”

And a poem:

Hiking with OLLI

Whichever Trail we hike today, we know it will be fun.
We start at nine and walk for miles. Some dog friends tag along.
Our valiant Val keeps steady pace as up and down we go;
Some hikers think he goes too fast, and others rather slow.

The former like to pause awhile to catch a breath or two,
Or stop, to simply gaze around, awed by a splendid view.
Shelly, patient, sweeps the rear, to ensure none are left behind,
And cheers us on whenever we slump: “The obstacle’s most in your mind!”

The hares among us race ahead, and clock a few more miles.
But hare or tortoise, at the end, we’ll all be wreathed in smiles.
We met the challenge, made the grade, had exercise, fresh air;
Met old friends and new, heard a joke or two, had many a story to share.

Dear Shelly and Val, we thank you both. We appreciate all that you do
To make each OLLI hike a joy. Three cheers for the two of you!
Together we’ve crossed Trails galore, in rain, and snow, and sun.
Here’s to many more breathtaking hikes: On and upward, everyone!

Robyn Yamada from the Denver Center for Performing Arts has been a big hit leading the OLLI Chorale, an OLLI Central Interactive class now in its third term – and growing each term.
Meet New Advisory Council Members

OLLI Central welcomed two new members of the Advisory Council this year – **Sydney Myers** and **Glenn Cooper**.

Sydney was born and raised in Denver. After graduating from the University of Colorado Boulder with a degree in Business, she married her high school sweetheart went to work as an assistant buyer at The Denver Dry Goods. Her career took her to Atlanta, back to Denver, and to Los Angeles where she met her second husband, Jim, on jury duty. He worked for Hughes Aircraft for 20 years. Sydney went to work for The Broadway for 8 years and then transitioned to a sales rep for ladies’ accessories.

In August of 1998, Jim went to Puerto Vallarta area to a small fishing village called La Cruz de Huanacaxtle to oversee the building of their house on property they’d purchased in 1993. They sold their home in LA and moved to La Cruz permanently in August 1999. “We had a wonderful six years there. My husband passed away in December of 2005 in La Cruz. At the same time my mother was diagnosed with Parkinson’s so I put the house in La Cruz on the market and moved back to Denver in October 2006,” said Sydney. “I got involved with OLLI in the spring of 2007 and have been keeping my mind active since then. I have been co-facilitating Current Events with Dick Reinish for going on four years (maybe 5--I can't remember!).

“I am so thankful for OLLI and the people I have met and become friends with. It truly is the best organization I have ever been a member of!!!”

Glenn has taken OLLI classes for the past four years. He recently joined the OLLI Advisory Committee, and volunteered to oversee Midday Morsels for the 2017 winter and spring sessions.

Glenn was manager of the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) for the Colorado Department of Human Services for approximately 24 years. During that time he served as chairman of the National Energy Assistance Directors Association, and was a founding member of the Colorado Energy Assistance Foundation (now Energy Outreach Colorado). He also served as part of a team that replaced food stamps and welfare checks with electronic debit cards.

Glenn is a Denver native who is married and has two adult children.

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Meet Bonnie Payne  
*By Ginger O’Neil*

In September 2016, **Bonnie Payne** became the President of the Advisory Council. The Council’s goal is to advance OLLI’s mission by supporting and advising the Executive Director. “We are the voice of the membership to the OLLI Leadership,” according to Bonnie. The Council also works with the Curriculum Committee to keep our curriculum vital and relevant to our changing times.

Bonnie had an exciting and demanding career as a chief executive who consulted with and managed large institutions, foundations, and a college in San Francisco. After retiring, she wanted to take a deep breath, relax and enjoy her life with her Denver and Montana family, and friends ... and take OLLI classes! For three years she attended classes, gradually gaining an understanding of OLLI and its vital role in enriching the lives of its participants. She decided it was time to give back to the organization that had become so vital to her. She joined the OLLI Central Advisory Council a year ago, thinking it was a good place to contribute her skills. She helped develop and deliver the first New Member Orientation her first year on the Council.

Bonnie's background in non-profit management and as a visionary for ever-changing organizations helped many institutions grow and become sustainable. As they grew during changing times and needs, their financial health through fund raising and community support was essential. OLLI is facing similar issues today as its membership expands rapidly and the need for new and more classes, facilities and human resources becomes evident. Bonnie feels confident that she can make a difference with the skills gained from her long career and her personal strengths of being innovative, visionary and an inspiration to others.

In praising Bonnie's accomplishments when she retired as Executive Director of Gamma Phi Beta Foundation, the staff described the feeling of family she created. She recognized individual talents and abilities and allowed employees freedom within their roles. OLLI has the challenge of being run almost solely by volunteers who need that type of support and encouragement. After we retire, we can spark new interests. We find ways to make meaningful contributions where everyone benefits from our efforts. We look forward to Bonnie’s contributions and hope she will inspire others to help make our OLLI program the best it can be.
New Interactive Classes in Spring

OLLI Central is pleased to offer two new Interactive courses in the Spring term and a continuation of the Ipad and MacIntosh instruction that was inaugurated for Winter. The new courses are T’ai Chi and Introducing Improvisation. Interactive classes are hands-on, augmenting OLLI’s core academic courses. Each Interactive course is fee-based to support the instructors.

T’ai Chi: Exercise is Medicine introduces you to the basics – the skills and principles. Core knowledge is discussed and skill sets demonstrated as participants explore this mediation in motion and its role in traditional Chinese medicine. This will be taught by Joseph Brady, a board-certified practitioner of oriental medicine and an authority on healthy aging who is facilitating a Spring Term academic course called Pathways to Wisdom: Living Healthy Naturally.

Introducing Improvisation is designed for all experience levels and encourages spontaneity and taking playful risks. It incorporates group activities and improvised scene work, storytelling and the power of play. Instructor Brian McManus from the Denver Center for Performing Arts engaged OLLI members in a fun series of activities in a lunchtime program at Central Christian Church on Jan. 17.

Trainer, speaker and author Maria Arapakis launched her IPad, IPhone and Mac classes in Winter Term. For Spring, she will teach “iPhone & IPad: The Fundamentals!, iPhone and iPad: Beyond the Basics!, and Mac “Meat, Potatoes, & Gravy.”

Find descriptions for all Interactive classes in the OLLI Central Spring 2017 catalog that becomes available online and in the OLLI office on Feb. 6.

A Call for Facilitators

Growth is an exciting thing, and OLLI Central is blessed with several hundred new members a year looking to enjoy our classes. We love the challenge, but we also need your help. As a volunteer organization, OLLI offers members a chance to learn new things and share ideas in a welcoming social environment. To keep pace with our growth, however, we need more facilitators to join our terrific faculty.

The most rewarding learning experience for many OLLI members is to organize and lead an OLLI class. And of the hundreds who have elected to facilitate in the past, the majority had never done it before. Facilitating does not necessarily require prior knowledge of the subject matter. Our classes are most often led by motivated members who want to stay engaged with life and expand their interests and leadership skills. In our fun, discussion-based classes, facilitators and participants create a shared learning experience.

To help members learn more, Curriculum Committee members are delighted to host individual and small group discussions (including insights from those who have facilitated) to answer any questions you may have. We are already planning our fall schedule, and would love to have you join us.

For more information about facilitating an OLLI class, please contact Nancy Cain, Central Curriculum Chair, at ncainforever@gmail.com. And thank you so much for being a part of this wonderful organization.
Next On Worldview: Mexico

Our WorldView program assists us to discover the world, one country at a time. WorldView Spain, our current focus, from all accounts is a great success. Next year our attention will turn to our neighbor to the south, Mexico.

Our neighbor has been selected as the focus of our 2017-18 terms due to the initiative of OLLI South member, Abe Grinberg. Abe, who was raised in Mexico, proposed a plan involving classes and tours. He’s going to take a very active role working with Curriculum Committees, creating a special event or two, and coordinating with a travel agency for three tours. More information will be provided during the Spring 2017 term.

Having an OLLI member propose a country for future WorldView considerations makes a great deal of sense and is the process we will be following in the future. If you have a country you would like to propose as a World View “Country of the Year,” and if you are willing to be actively involved in the project, please request a proposal form from the office or email me at Barbara.Ratcliffe@du.edu.

OLLI at DU Int’l Symposium

The annual Bill Beaney International Symposium was held Dec. 2 at DU. Over 130 OLLI members heard from two expert professors on “The Response of Two World Super Powers to the Results of the U.S. Election.” The presentations were very comprehensive, and left many with a very different understanding of how the world views the U.S. and our recent election.

Steven S. Chen, a Professor of Distinction at the University of Colorado and Director of the Farrand Residence Academic Program, spoke on China. He began by discussing the manner in which China as a country is positioning itself in the world. His data regarding the trade between China and the U.S. cast an acute awareness of the need of the U.S. and China to cooperate. Professor Chen continued to ask the attendees to consider U.S. actions from the perspective of China.

After lunch Artemi Romanov, CU Professor of Russian Studies, spoke on Russia. This presentation addressed the Russia and U.S. relationship, and Russia’s response to the election. It also cast a very different point of view. The presentation ended with a photo of a Russian billboard depicting Putin and Trump with the words “Making the World Great Again” in both Russian and English. It was quite a closing!

Being presented with and asked to consider how other countries view the U.S. was an amazing opportunity. We look forward to future opportunities such as this.

Mark Your Calendar

February 14
Midday Morsels. “Peace Corps Today & Opportunities for Experienced Americans.”
Central Christian Church. 11:45 – 12:45.

February 20
Sprint Term Catalog Posted: Registration Begins

February 21
Central Christian Church, 11:40-12:50

March 10
Hot Topic Luncheon (OLLI West)

April 21
Hot Topic Luncheon: Dr. Kim Gordons: The Caring and Feeding of Brains (OLLI South)

March 27-May 19
Spring Term

In Memoriam
Al Haggerty

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